



Concept Note on the First Meeting
of the Network of Women
Parliamentarians in Africa and Arab World

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
May 2024



Executive Summary

1 st Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians	
Date	May 2, 2024
Host Country	Virtual
Meeting Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agreement on Network Logo, Mission, Vision, and Objectives.2. Assessment of the Status of Women in Arab and African countries3. Network Marketing4. Any Other Business.
Other Remarks	

Introduction

The Rabat Declaration on the establishment of the Parliamentary Network for Women Parliamentarians in Africa and the Arab World, announced on the sidelines of the South-South Parliamentary Cooperation Meeting, represents a significant strategic step towards enhancing the role of women in political and parliamentary life. This declaration underscores the importance of providing a supportive environment and a platform for collaboration and exchange among women parliamentarians in the region, creating a space through which they can develop a program that serves women in Africa and the Arab world, ensuring the protection of their fundamental rights and supporting them in all aspects of life.

By developing this program, the network aims to promote women's participation in policy formulation and decision-making at the regional and international levels, while enhancing their capacities and empowering them to achieve equal opportunities and social justice. The first meeting of the network serves as a vital starting point that contributes to enhancing cooperation and coordination among women parliamentarians, marking an important beginning for future development and the realization of the network's goals in enhancing women's role in parliamentary and political spheres.



This network will operate in accordance with international treaties and agreements that safeguard and protect women's rights, thereby reinforcing its commitment to promoting equality and women's rights worldwide. It will ensure the activation of international legal instruments in favor of women in parliamentary and political arenas.

Agenda of the Meeting

The first meeting of the Parliamentary Network for Women Parliamentarians in Africa and the Arab World will address several key objectives, including:

Firstly, reaching an agreement on the network's identity by innovating an acronym for its name and selecting a logo, mission, vision, and objectives.

The focus will be on defining the network's identity through the creation of an acronym using the initial English letters of the Network's name in a way that contributes to designing a logo for it.

Three proposals will be discussed in this regard. Additionally, the meeting will discuss the messages that the network wishes to convey through its vision and mission, along with identifying the main goals it seeks to achieve.

Secondly, evaluating the status of women in Arab and African countries by reviewing the challenges and opportunities faced by women in parliamentary and political fields. Discussions will revolve around finding effective means to enhance their status, promote their roles, and increase their participation in these sectors. Furthermore, attention will be given to compiling **the content of reports related to women parliamentarians and politicians from international organizations during the years 2022-2023.** The network will also work towards releasing an annual index to assess the empowerment of Arab and African women parliamentarians, whether on International Women's Day, International Democracy Day, or the anniversary of the Network's establishment.

Thirdly, marketing the network by developing strategies to raise awareness about the network and attract more potential supporters and partners. This will be achieved through the activation of parliamentary diplomacy and effective promotion of the Network's activities.

Fourthly, Network future tasks and activities



These will be outlined by creating specific action plans and determining the next steps required to achieve the Network's objectives within a defined timeline. This includes organizing events, implementing projects, and enhancing cooperation with relevant entities.

* Status of Women

Based on the latest reports from reputable international organizations dedicated to documenting women's issues across various fields, the most crucial topics related to women will be reviewed and evaluated to ensure women's fundamental rights as well as their empowerment in local and international societies. This comprehensive assessment will encompass political representation, civil rights, healthcare policies, and education in member countries of the Parliamentary Network, including Gulf nations as well as Arab and African countries.

Political Representation

Within the Gulf countries, there has been a relative advancement in women's participation within the political landscape. While some nations have witnessed notable progress regarding women's representation in legislative bodies and government, women still encounter challenges in terms of increasing the rate of their representation.

In the Arab world and African countries, the rate of women's representation in political institutions varies from one nation to another. While certain countries have made considerable progress in women's representation within parliaments and governments, others still face significant challenges in this respect.

*Civil and Political Rights

The status of women's rights in the Gulf, Arab world, and African countries differs based on culture, traditions, and legislation. In some nations, women's rights have been upheld in areas such as employment and participation in public life. However, more needs to be done in terms of addressing women's issues and enhancing their rights in other countries.



Women in certain countries still confront challenges in areas such as inheritance rights, employment, protection against domestic violence, and other issues that profoundly impact their daily lives.

***Healthcare and Education**

The Gulf region has witnessed significant progress in providing healthcare and educational services to women, granting them the right to access quality healthcare and distinctive education.

In the Arab world and African countries, women may face challenges in accessing healthcare and education due to economic, social, and cultural factors.

During the meeting, numbers and figures from member countries regarding these areas will be discussed to explore ways of ensuring women's fundamental rights while seeking avenues to promote them.

Network Identity

One of the desired outcomes of the meeting is to agree on the network's identity, as it plays a crucial role in clearly shaping its program, defining its vision and mission, and serving as a guiding principle for future decisions emanating from the meeting.

***Vision**

To achieve more equitable societies for women in political and parliamentary life.

***Mission**

To enhance women's participation in political life and decision-making, realize gender equality and enhance women's rights in Africa and the Arab world.

***Objectives**

1. Increase women's representation in parliamentary councils and decision-making platforms, ensuring their effective participation in policy-making and legislation.
2. Establish partnerships with international, regional, and local organizations to exchange experiences and enhance cooperation in promoting women's role in political life.



3. Raise awareness about gender equality and women's rights, and address the challenges they face, and work towards finding effective solutions to achieve equality and social justice.
4. Foster communication and collaboration among women parliamentarians in Africa and the Arab world, facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing, and provide mutual support to achieve their shared goals.

***Official Communication Channels**

The establishment of formal communication channels, such as email and a dedicated webpage on AASSECA's website, holds great importance in enhancing communication and interaction with network members and stakeholders interested in issues related to women's representation in parliamentary councils. These channels serve as effective means to facilitate the dissemination of information, news, and events pertaining to the network's activities and objectives.

They also provide a direct channel for receiving feedback and suggestions from members and partners. Additionally, these communication channels create an interactive environment that encourages communication, exchange of experiences, and knowledge sharing among network members, thus fostering cooperation and building a robust network to support parliaments.

Network Marketing

Marketing the network and building diplomatic relations with legislative bodies, parliaments, and international organizations concerned with women's issues are essential factors that significantly contribute to the success and development of the network. These efforts help expand the network's influence and media presence at the international level. Furthermore, deepening diplomatic relations enhances the connections between the network and relevant entities interested in women's rights and their representation in parliaments. Some organizations with which close relationships can be established include:

- *The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- *United Nations (UN) / UN Women
- *World Health Organization (WHO)
- *International Labour Organization (ILO)



*League of Arab States (LAS)

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

*Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

